

Ch 9 Interest Groups

Interest Group—private organization that tries to persuade public officials to respond to the shared attitudes of its members—seek to influence the making and content of public policy, all the goals that a government pursues in many of the areas of human affairs.

1. Types of Interest Groups

- A. **Business Interest Groups**—promote the interests of business in American—high tariffs—**National Association of Manufacturers**—represents 14,000 firms and supports big business—**United States Brewers' Association**—formed in response to the taxing on beer. Most segments have their own trade associations, which leads business interest groups to be divided
- B. **Labor Unions**—organizations of workers who share the same job or work in the same industry. Labor unions press for government policy supporting workers
- C. **Agricultural Groups**—several powerful organizations have a lot of influence in policy making involving agriculture and specific commodities—Started with the Grange
- D. **Professional Groups**—medicine, law, teaching—try to promote and maintain their professional interests. Not as large or well financed as other groups. **American Medical Association, National Education Association, American Bar Association.**
- E. **American Civil Liberties Union**—fights to protect civil and political rights
- F. **National Wildlife Federation**—protect conservation and environmental protection
- G. **Religious Groups**—**The National Catholic Welfare Council, American Jewish Congress**

2. Influence of Interest Groups

- A. Supply the public with information
- B. Build a positive image of the group
- C. Promote a particular policy

3. Modes of Influence

- A. **Litigation**—the act of contesting a legal action in court—court decisions have the rule of law and set precedent. NAACP during civil rights era. ACLU today.
- B. **Propaganda**—technique of persuasion aimed at influencing individual or group behavior—its goal is to create a certain belief whether it's true or false.
- C. **Influence Parties and Elections**—groups tend to closely align themselves with a particular party, groups may encourage member to be active in a party and/or perhaps run for office, or single-interest groups may work for or against a candidate based on 1 particular issue.
- D. **Lobbying**—interest groups bring pressure on legislators and the legislative process by trying to provide support and pressure on legislators as they consider the passage of a bill. 20,000+ lobbyists in Washington and in every state.
- E. **Lobbyist Techniques of Polite Persuasion**—share articles, reports and other modes of information to officeholders, testify before legislative committees, “grass roots” pressure—letters, emails, editorials from back home which acts as the voice of the people, publish ratings of members of Congress
- F. **Lobbying Disclosure Act 1995**—lobbyist must register if they seek to influence a member of congress. Must provide basic personal information and group information and provide semiannual reports.